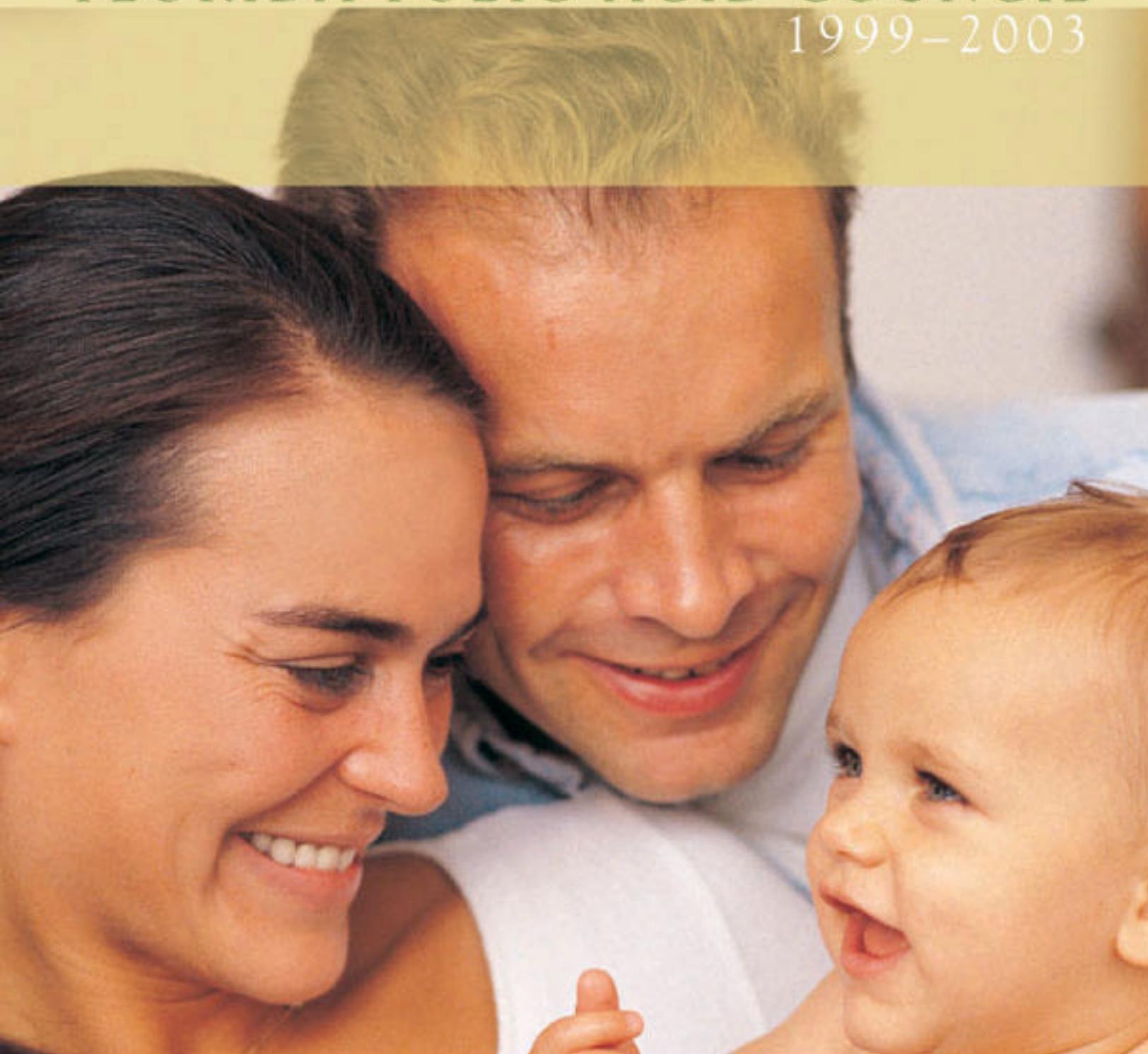


FLORIDA FOLIC ACID COUNCIL  
1999-2003



A Compendium of the Council's Activities

# Florida Folic Acid Council 1999-2003

A Compendium of the  
Council's Activities



HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER  
Medicine • Nursing • Public Health



# Florida Folic Acid Council: Overview of Activities, 1999-2003

## INTRODUCTION

In 1992, the United States Public Health Service recommended that all women of childbearing age in the United States, who are capable of becoming pregnant, consume 0.4 mg of folic acid for the purpose of reducing their risk of having a pregnancy affected with spina bifida or other neural tube defects (NTDs). National surveys conducted by the Gallup Organization for the March of Dimes found that the percentage of women of childbearing age with knowledge of preventive effects of folic acid was high (59% in 1995 to 74% in 2002). However, less than a majority of women surveyed took vitamins on a daily basis, or even around the time of their last pregnancies.

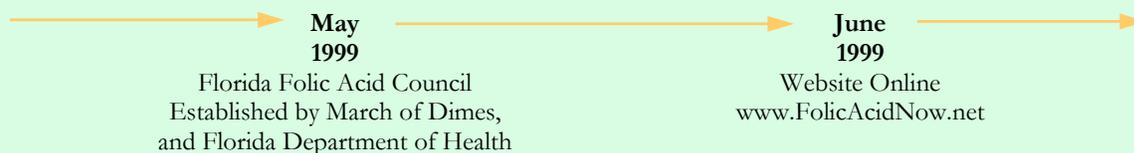
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the March of Dimes (MOD) combined efforts to form the National Council on Folic Acid (NCFA) in 1999. NCFA is a partnership of over 880 national organizations and associations, state folic acid councils and government agencies whose mission is to improve health by promoting the benefits and consump-

tion of folic acid. It is currently managed by the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition through a cooperative agreement with the CDC. The goals of NCFA are

- To reduce folic acid preventable birth defects by recommending that women of childbearing age take 400 micrograms of synthetic folic acid daily, from fortified foods and/or supplements, in addition to consuming food folate from a varied diet
- To communicate and promote emerging and new science on folic acid, especially that related to maternal and child health.

The Florida Folic Acid Council (FFAC) was founded in 1999 in response to the national campaign. The FFAC is a coalition of organizations committed to promoting the daily consumption of 400 micrograms (0.4 mg) of folic acid by women in their childbearing years for the prevention of NTDs. The Council launched a folic acid education campaign targeted at reducing the incidence of NTDs, such as spina bifida and anencephaly. Approaches include a statewide public awareness campaign and professional and community-based educational activities promoting folic acid consumption by women of childbearing

### Highlights of Florida's Folic Acid Campaign 1999-2003



age. The structure of the Council is modeled on that of the National Council on Folic Acid (NCFA). In 2002, the FFAC joined the NCFA when all state Councils were invited to join.

The FFAC is a public/private partnership of the March of Dimes, Florida Chapter (MOD-FL), the Florida Department of Health (FDOH), and the Birth Defects Center at the University of South Florida (USF-BDC). From 1999 to 2002, the Council was led by MOD-FL; in 2002 the USF-BDC assumed leadership. The functions and activities of the FFAC are governed by an Executive Committee composed of representatives from FDOH, MOD-FL, USF-BDC, Spina Bifida Association of Florida, the University of Florida Institute for Food and Agricultural Science, Healthy Start Coalitions and the Lawton and Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy Mothers and Healthy Babies.

The main goal of the FFAC is to decrease the prevalence of folic acid preventable NTDs in Florida. The Council is working toward accomplishing this goal through the following strategies:

- Increasing the proportion of women of child-bearing age in Florida who understand that consuming folic acid daily can help prevent NTDs
- Increasing the number of women who consume a multivitamin containing 400 micrograms (0.4 mg) of folic acid daily as part of their balanced diet
- Making folic acid awareness a routine and standard part of the delivery of preventive health care services to women of Florida
- Through its members, providing public and professional education on the folic acid recommendations from the United States Public Health Service and the Institute of Medicine
- Assisting with the implementation of a mass media campaign in Florida with special emphasis on high-risk populations.

In addition, the FFAC seeks to educate health care practitioners, child health advocates and the public about the important public health opportunity folic acid represents for the prevention of serious birth defects and other diseases of public health significance.

Membership in the FFAC is open to any public or private agency that seeks to improve the health of babies by preventing NTDs in Florida. There are no membership fees; however, membership incurs an obligation to develop and implement some type of folic acid education activity, either public or professional, by each participating agency. Members are kept informed of changes in knowledge and in professional prac-



tices related to the provision of folic acid education via website, newsletters and Council meetings. In 2001, the FFAC presented certificates of appreciation to supporters of the Council.



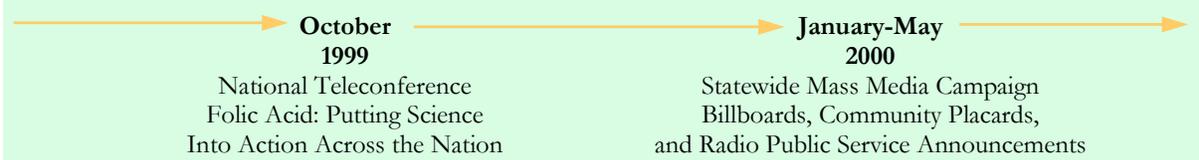
Current members of the FFAC are the following:

- Agency for Health Care Administration
- Florida Department of Citrus
- Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Institute of Public Health, College of Pharmacy and Pharmacy Services
- Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions
- Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County, Inc
- Healthy Start Coalition of Manatee County, Inc
- Healthy Start Coalition of Martin County
- Healthy Start Coalition of Pasco County
- Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County
- Healthy Start Coalition of Southwest Florida, Inc
- Florida Birth Defects Registry

- Florida Blue Cross/Blue Shield
- Rexall Sundown
- Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics/Florida Pediatric Society
- Florida Peanut Producers Association
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Florida Department of Health
- Spina Bifida Association of Florida, Inc
- Florida Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
- Florida State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention
- Policy Healthy Community Initiative of Greater Orlando
- Nine West
- Highlands County Health Department/WIC JMH Health Plan/Public Health Trust of Dade County
- Lawton and Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy Mothers and Babies
- March of Dimes Florida Chapter
- Publix Grocery Stores
- The Florida Midwifery Resource Center
- Tropicana Products, Inc
- University of Florida Cooperative Extension Services
- Zeta Phi Beta Chapters of Florida
- Shriners Hospital for Children, Tampa

A website was created for the FFAC and can be found at [www.folicacidnow.net](http://www.folicacidnow.net). The website contains information, in both English and Spanish, for the general public about folic acid and neural tube defects, including sources of free

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folic acid. A section of similar information for health care professionals, information about the Council itself and links to related sites are also included. The FFAC newsletters and announcements of upcoming events can also be found on this site.

In 1999, MOD-FL, FDOH, FFAC and the Florida Birth Defects Registry represented by the USF-BDC joined together to apply for a March of Dimes Foundation Mission Investment Opportunities Grant (MIOP) to develop and implement Florida's Folic Acid Campaign. This proposal, "Science Into Action: Florida's Folic Acid Campaign" was funded in September of 1999 and focused on the following three major objectives targeted at women in their childbearing years:

- Increasing the number of health care providers who incorporate folic acid education as a routine and standard part of preventive health care
- Increasing the proportion of women who are aware that folic acid helps to prevent NTDs when taken prior to conception and in the first month of pregnancy
- Increasing the proportion of non-pregnant women who report taking a vitamin containing 400 micrograms of folic acid daily.

To accomplish these goals, it was necessary to

obtain baseline information on the level of folic acid knowledge of both health care professionals (physicians, nurse midwives, nurses, and pharmacists) and women of childbearing age. Therefore, MIOP funds were used to collect data about these groups' knowledge of the use of folic acid in the prevention of NTDs.

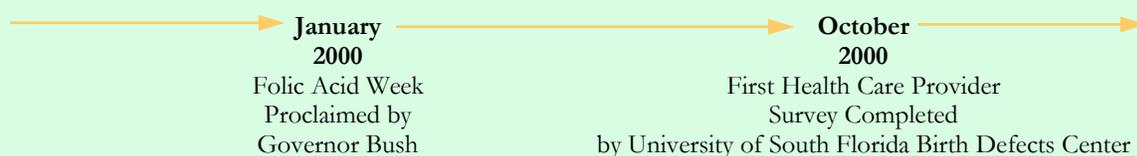
## SURVEYS

Both published and unpublished reports continued to show an increasing trend for women of childbearing age to know about folic acid and its benefits. However, this increase in knowledge did not translate into more women taking folic acid daily. In addition, surveys indicated that information about folic acid was being obtained largely from the printed media, rather than from health care providers.

### PROFESSIONAL SURVEYS

To determine the participation of health care providers in disseminating information about folic acid, a survey of doctors of Family Practice, Obstetrics/Gynecology and Pediatrics and a survey of midwives was conducted by the USF-BDC. The purposes of the surveys were to gather information about the need for genetics information in Florida and to ascertain levels of knowledge pertaining to folic acid. The overall

### Highlights of Florida's Folic Acid Campaign 1999-2003



response rate was 29%. Responses indicated that the majority of survey participants knew that use of folic acid following United States Public Health Service (USPHS) guidelines would most likely prevent NTDs if started at least one month before pregnancy. The correct dose to prevent occurrence of NTDs was identified by 48% of Pediatricians, 58% of Family Practitioners, 74% of Obstetricians/Gynecologists and 82% of nurse midwives. However, only 22% of all respondents recognized the appropriate dose for prevention of recurrences. Sixty-one per cent (61%) of obstetricians and nurse midwives, but only 41% of family practice physicians and 39% of pediatricians reported that they recommend daily folic acid to all women of childbearing age most or all of the time.

Following implementation of selected

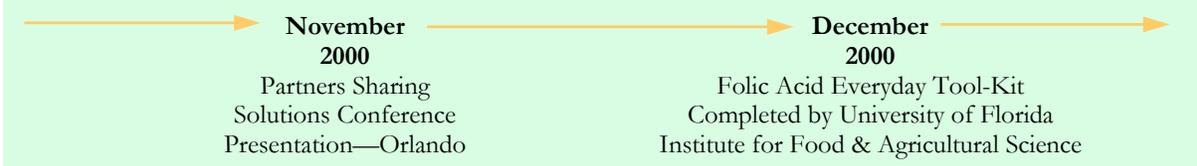
education measures, the physicians were surveyed again to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational programs. Results showed a 22% increase in knowledge of the correct dose of folic acid and a 27% increase in the recommendation of folic acid to women of childbearing age (Table 1). An article describing the results of the two surveys has been accepted for publication in the Southern Medical Journal.

A survey of 7,000 randomly selected pharmacists containing six folic acid-related questions and two practice-related questions was conducted. Returns numbered 535 (7.6%). A large majority of responding pharmacists knew the correct dose of folic acid to be taken from at least one month before pregnancy to prevent birth defects. However, only 14% of these respondents recognized the correct dose to prevent recurrences.

**Table 1: Response Percentage of Health Care Providers**

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Family Physicians</i>		<i>Nurse Midwives</i>		<i>Obstetricians/ Gynecologists</i>		<i>Pediatricians</i>	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
<u>Knowledge</u>								
400 micrograms	58%	65%	82%	88%	74%	89%	48%	65%
4.0 milligrams	21%	28%	45%	48%	53%	73%	20%	27%
Take Before Conception	77%	82%	94%	96%	87%	94%	77%	83%
<u>Behavior</u>								
Recommend Most of the Time or Always	41%	51%	62%	81%	61%	85%	39%	43%

**Highlights of Florida's Folic Acid Campaign  
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A little more than 50% of this group recommended daily folic acid use to women of childbearing age most or all of the time.

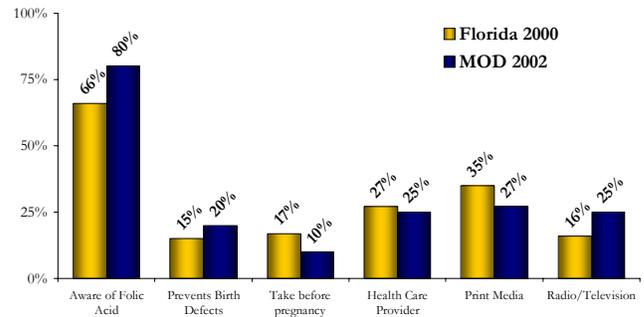
A survey similar to the pharmacists' was mailed to a random sample of 9,500 active registered nurses residing in Florida, 500 of whom were ARNPs. A total of 499 (5%) surveys were returned. Although the surveys were color-coded to differentiate responses of ARNPs from those of other RNs, only 35 ARNPs responded to the survey, making the numbers too small for a comparison between the two groups. Of the nurses who responded, 51% could identify the correct folic acid dose to prevent occurrence of NTDs, but only 11% could correctly identify the dose for prevention of recurrence. Fifty-three per cent (53%) of the respondents said that they recommended folic acid most of the time or always.

#### PUBLIC SURVEYS

From February 2000 through January 2001, data were collected on folic acid knowledge of and use by women of childbearing age in Florida. The USF-BDC contracted with the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida to add folic acid related questions to their on-going consumer telephone survey. From this database, a sample of 1,784

women between the ages of 18 and 44 was obtained. This survey provided, for the first time, information about folic acid from women who had children as well as those who did not.

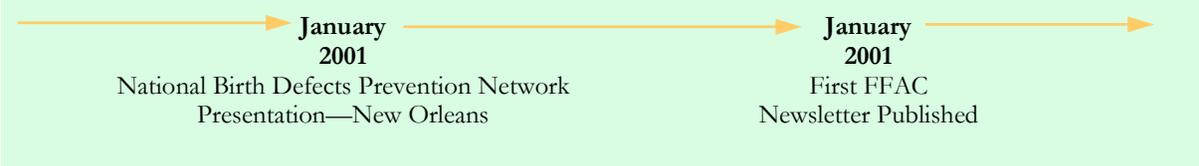
**Figure 1**  
**Folic Acid Knowledge**  
**Florida 2000 vs. MOD 2002**



Result indicated that 66% of these women were aware of folic acid, but only 15% knew that it helped to prevent birth defects and only 17% knew it should be taken before pregnancy.

The FDOH, with funding from March of Dimes grants, was instrumental in achieving the addition of folic acid-related questions on both the Pregnancy Risk Monitoring System (PRAMS) for one year and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) for two years. Survey results in both 2000 and 2001 showed an increased number of Florida women, aged 18-44 years, taking a multivitamin daily in comparison with national survey results.

#### Highlights of Florida's Folic Acid Campaign 1999-2003



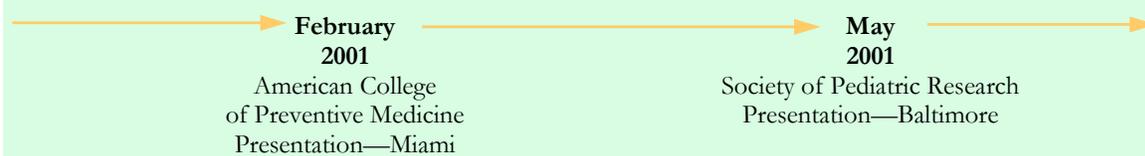
Results of these surveys are congruent with those of the national survey in finding that young women (age 18-24 years) are less likely to take a multivitamin than are their older counterparts (ages 25-44 years). Responses to folic acid related questions on BRFSS may be found in Table 2. Although data regarding ethnicity and

socioeconomic status cannot be linked in this sample, other studies have found that knowledge and use of folic acid are particularly low in women of low socioeconomic status, low level of education and in young Hispanic women.

**Table 2**  
**Response to Folic Acid Questions**  
**BRFSS, 2000 and 2001**

Question:	2000	2001
	% responding Yes	% responding Yes
1. Do you currently take any vitamin pill or supplements?		
18-24	47%	48%
25-34	56%	61%
35-44	61%	61%
2. Are any of these a multivitamin? (Denominator: Respondents reporting current vitamin or supplement use)		
18-24	82%	76%
25-34	87%	87%
35-44	83%	83%
3. Do any of the vitamin pills or supplements you take contain folic acid? (Denominator: Respondents reporting current vitamin or supplement use)		
18-24	36%	26%
25-34	44%	40%
35-44	28%	34%
4. How often do you take this vitamin pill or supplement? (Denominator: Respondents who take a multivitamin or a vitamin with folic acid)		
	<b>Daily or more</b>	<b>2001</b>
	<b>2000</b>	<b>% responding</b>
18-24	81%	85%
25-34	83%	91%
35-44	86%	85%
5. Some health experts recommend that women take 400 micrograms of the B vitamin folic acid, for which one of the following reasons . . .		
	<b>To prevent birth defects</b>	<b>2001</b>
	<b>2000</b>	<b>% responding</b>
18-24	29%	37%
25-34	42%	54%
35-44	30%	37%

**Highlights of Florida's Folic Acid Campaign**  
**1999-2003**



## NEURAL TUBE DEFECTS SURVEILLANCE

To track changes in the rate of NTDs in Florida's population, the FDOH contracted with the USF-BDC to conduct a population-based active surveillance of NTDs in selected Florida counties that contained approximately 75% of the state's live births. For the purpose of this survey, a NTD was defined as anencephaly, spina bifida with or without hydrocephalus, and encephalocele. Data on prenatal vitamin usage were collected along with other demographic and medical information. From 2000 through 2002, there were 325 infants identified with a NTD in 43 counties.

Information was obtained about cases diagnosed both pre- and post-natally.

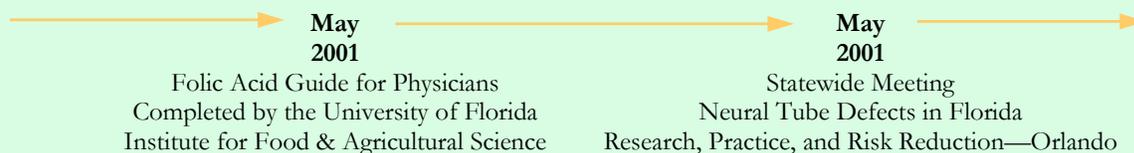
## PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Based on the identified need for folic acid education as seen in the results of the survey of health care professionals, members of the FFAC utilized a variety of media to provide the needed information and to encourage sharing of the information with patients. Written material consisted of pamphlets, flyers,

brochures, banners and magnets, all of which conveyed to women of childbearing age the importance of taking daily folic acid in the appropriate dose. In many cases, these materials were available in both English and Spanish. The USF-BDC sent order forms for MOD and CDC materials, the MOD Folic Acid Fact Sheet, and a "Thank You" note to all physicians and midwives who completed the first survey. The MOD-FL sent a copy of the Gallup Survey report to all MOD divisions in the state and the FDOH sent a copy of the CDC's "Preventing Neural Tube Birth Defects: A Prevention Model and Resource Guide" to all health departments and MOD-FL divisions for distribution throughout the state.

The MOD-FL and FDOH were instrumental in providing funding for construction and distribution of materials to both health care providers and their patients. Folic acid education materials were mailed to more than 5,000 health care providers and the FDOH, regional divisions of the MOD-FL and county health departments distributed additional materials at hospital grand rounds, health fairs and professional meetings. In addition, an instruction/training packet on presenting folic acid information to low-literacy individuals was made available.

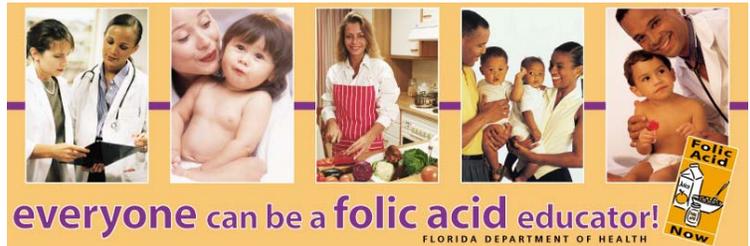
### Highlights of Florida's Folic Acid Campaign 1999-2003



With funding from the CDC, MOD-FL, Healthy Start of North Central Florida, and the FDOH, the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Services developed the Folic Acid Tool Kit in both English and Spanish. This Tool Kit contained a module for training nurses and nutritionists about the importance of daily 400 microgram doses of folic acid for women of childbearing age. Tool Kits were purchased by the FDOH and distributed to its county health departments, to FFAC members for the purpose of preparing staff for educating their clients of childbearing age and sent to the CDC for distribution to other states. Kits were made available to participants at Partners Sharing Solutions Conferences. In 2003, the Tool Kit won the Gold Image Award presented by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Science Marketing and Communications Unit in the Multi Media category.



County health departments and FFAC members also had access to a banner entitled “Everyone Can Be A Folic Acid Educator” which was designed and produced by the FDOH.

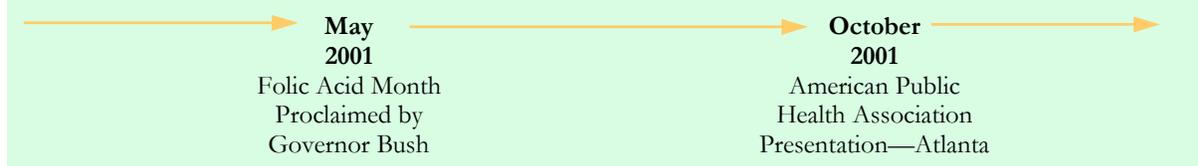


Many county health departments used available funds and materials to present folic acid information to health care providers in their locales. In DeSoto County, for example, classes were conducted for local health care providers, hospitals and community agencies.

As part of a doctoral program project, a web-based folic acid education module was developed for use by medical students at the University of Florida, the University of South Florida and the University of Miami.

Articles in newsletters and professional journals served as reminders, as well as sources of additional information, for health care providers. Articles were included in the newsletters of the Florida Pediatrics Society, the Lawton and Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy

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Mothers and Healthy Babies and county medical societies. An Article entitled, “Neural Tube Defects in Infants of Hispanic Origin, 1996-1997” was published in the Florida Health Care Journal and an article entitled “Florida Health Care Providers’ Knowledge of Folic Acid for the Prevention of Neural Tube Defects” has been accepted for publication in the Southern Medical Journal.

The FFAC constructed and published three newsletters, which have been sent to all Council members and Council supporters. Copies of the FFAC newsletter are available on the FFAC website.

A teleconference entitled “Folic Acid: Putting Science Into Action Across the Nation” was presented nationwide in October 1999. Participants in the teleconference were Godfrey Oakley, MD, Visiting Professor at Emery University, Donald R. Mattison, MD, Medical Director, March of Dimes, Jaime Frías, MD, Professor of Pediatrics and Director of the Birth Defects Center at the University of South Florida, Lynn Bailey, PhD, Professor of Food Science and Human Nutrition at the University of Florida and Joseph Mulinare, MD of the CDC.

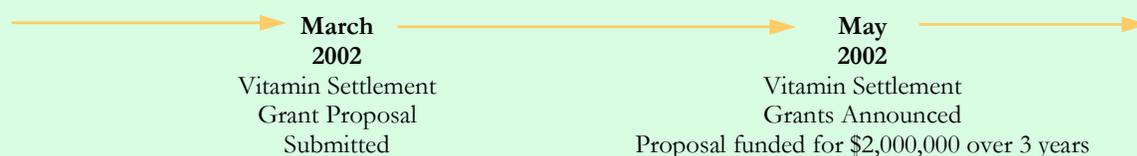
## PUBLIC EDUCATION

Reported folic acid knowledge of the general public, and particularly of women of childbearing age, has noted the trend of an increasing number of women knowing about the benefits of folic acid that is not matched by a similar increase in the number of women taking folic acid supplements. In addition, in most studies, a direct relationship was found between age, income, and education and using folic acid. Other epidemiological studies have consistently reported an increased incidence of NTDs in Hispanic women, particularly foreign-born Hispanic women. Data from a report published by USF-BDC showed that in Florida, within Hispanic groups, foreign-born Mexican mothers had the highest risk for NTD affected pregnancies.

With these available facts, members of the FFAC utilized various media to promote use of folic acid supplements and a diet rich in folate by the people of Florida, particularly women of childbearing age. The MOD-FL and FDOH were important sources of funding for these educational materials.

The University of Florida Institute of Food

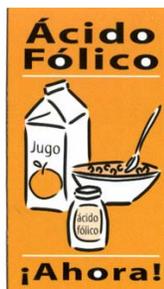
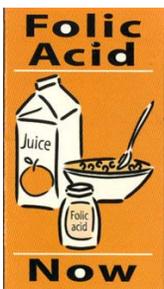
### Highlights of Florida’s Folic Acid Campaign 1999-2003



and Agricultural Services is constructing a folic acid education module for young people which will be distributed through 4-H programs. This module will be completed during this year. Folic acid presentations have also been held at student activity days at local high schools.



Colleges and universities were sites of health fairs, “dorm storms” and folic acid brunches. Orange juice for these brunches was donated by Tropicana Products, Inc. At all of these activities, folic acid information and health promotion



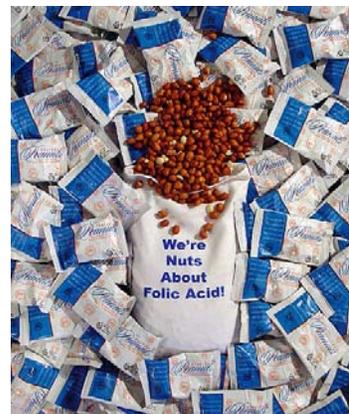
materials were distributed to attendees. At some of these fairs, free folic acid was given to all young women.

The USF-BDC conducted a College Folic Acid Awareness Campaign during the 2001-2002 academic year. Four community colleges and three universities were selected as sites for this

campaign. Activities included display tables and “Taste and Learn” seminars. Recipe books were available from the Florida Department of Citrus and the Florida Peanut Growers Association to enable use of high folate recipes in the home.

Some recipes from these books are also available on the FFAC website. Folic acid information, as well as free folic acid, was distributed. Health promotion materials included “Get the ‘B’ Attitude” brochures, “Folic Acid Now” magnets,

pens, make-up bags and beach balls. The Florida Peanut Producers Association donated more than 1000 cases of peanuts to the MOD-FL, which distributed these at



health fairs and conferences. The MOD logo appeared on each packet of peanuts along with the following statement: “Peanuts are a good natural source of the B-vitamin folic acid. Folic acid can help prevent birth defects.”

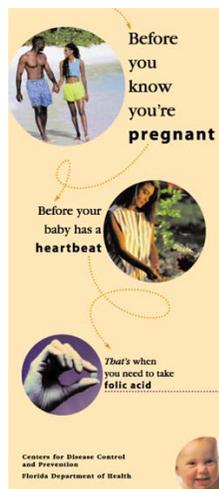
County health departments, the MOD-FL and Healthy Start Coalitions conducted health fairs across the state. One of the topics at these fairs was the place of folic acid in health maintenance

### Highlights of Florida’s Folic Acid Campaign 1999-2003



for young women. FDOH staff members manned a booth at the capitol during Public Health Week in April 2000. Health care professionals spread the message to their clients with new patient packets that contained MOD or CDC brochures about folic acid. Using CDC funds, the FDOH created the “Before You Know It” brochure in both English and Spanish and arranged for its distribution. Public service announcements, using the text of “Before You Know It” are available on videotape for all county health departments and any other organization that wants to distribute them to clients. A “Family Health and Fitness Day” was held at Daytona Beach Community College where information about preconceptional health, nutrition and folic acid was distributed.

With funding from MOD-FL, FDOH and CDC, a mass media campaign was launched. Billboards at five sites, community placards at 110 locations and radio public service announcements were purchased and utilized through January 2001. These were designed by the FDOH and, with the exception of the billboard, were



constructed in both English and Spanish. The billboards were placed in Escambia, Leon, Duval,



Hillsborough and Orange counties. Community placards were placed in 110 locations in Dade, Palm Beach, Orange and Hillsborough counties. Radio spots were purchased at English and Spanish radio stations in Dade, Palm Beach, Hillsborough, Duval, and Escambia counties for the public service announcement. The text for the public service announcement was from the “Before You Know It” brochure. A newspaper insert entitled “Folic Acid Now”, authored by the Northwest Florida Division of the MOD and the FDOH, was published by the Tallahassee Democrat with circulation of more than 50,000 people in north Florida area.



The USF-BDC has presented the folic acid message to civic groups. Education sessions have also been included in clinics and outreach programs.

In north central Florida, the local division of MOD collaborated with the local Association of Pharmacists to develop folic acid message stickers for oral contraceptive containers. The message said “FOLIC ACID Take a multivitamin every day! Why? Ask your pharmacist.”

The FDOH purchased more than 30,000 bottles of folic acid and made these available to county health departments, Healthy Start Coalitions and MOD-FL chapters. These bottles of folic acid were ultimately distributed, along with other educational materials, at college and community health fairs, conferences, community bridal and baby showers, family planning clinics and to young women who registered at a clinic or requested a pregnancy test. With funding



donated by Nine West, the MOD-FL purchased vitamins for distribution to women in the 18-24 year age group. The vitamins were provided at minimal cost by Rexall Sundown. The USF-BDC, in collaboration with the MOD-FL, was instrumental in developing a successful proposal to the Florida Attorney General’s office for Vitamin Grant settlement funds. These funds will be used for vitamin distribution throughout the state.

Other county agencies, such as WIC in Palm Beach County, developed an original brochure that included folic acid information for distribution to their specific patient population. In addition to providing information about folic acid at health fairs and other events, the Spina Bifida Association based in Jacksonville donated a folic acid basket to the Mother and Daughter Day celebration at the Southern Women’s Show.

With MOD funding, folic acid campaigns were conducted by Healthy Start Coalitions in both Martin and Osceola counties. In Martin County, education slides were shown at the cinemas of the Regency Theater and information advertisements, written in Spanish, were placed in the local Spanish-language newspaper, Accion. Surveys of consumers and health care providers were conducted at the start and completion of

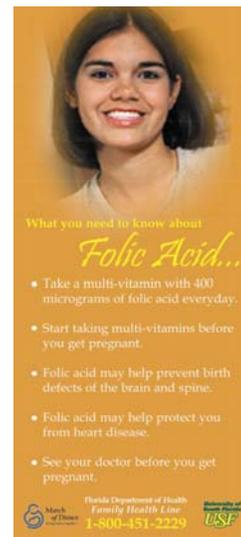
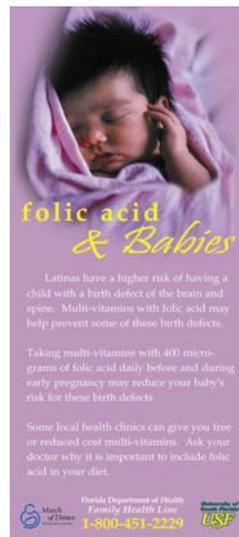


the campaign to determine effectiveness. Survey results indicated an increase in folic acid knowledge and awareness. The Healthy Start Coalition in Osceola County also used advertisements at a local theater, Osceola Cinema 6 and newspaper advertisements in both English and Spanish in El Osceola Star. In addition, informational brochures, in both English and Spanish, were distributed to physicians' offices, pharmacies, schools, grocery stores, food banks and day care centers. Professional nutrition staff trained key individuals in the Hispanic community on preconception planning with a focus on folic acid consumption and offered similar training to all teachers of health in the middle and high schools. Foods rich in folic acid were served at all training sessions. Several County Health Departments participated in various folic acid activities

FDOH materials, along with those from the MOD and CDC, were utilized by the CDC in its pilot project of the National Folic Acid Campaign in Miami, to educate Hispanic women of childbearing age about the importance of consuming folic acid. These materials were distributed at local events, health fairs, area health clinics, and through local health care providers in the Miami area. Evaluation of the project by the National Council found folic acid awareness increased from 46% to 71% in the target group.

### Participating County Health Departments

- Citrus
- Collier
- Holmes
- Marion
- Monroe
- Okaloosa
- Palm Beach
- St. Johns
- St. Lucie
- Sarasota
- Suwannee & Lafayette
- Volusia



A brochure at a low literacy level, public service announcements and a photo-novella were designed, produced and distributed by the USF-BDC and staff from the National Training Collaborative of Social Marketing at USF. All of



these were produced in both English and Spanish. This project was begun with an evaluation of existing materials from the MOD, FDOH and the state of North Carolina. Face-to-face interviews with 22 participants and eight focus groups with 65 participants were conducted by staff from the National Training Collaborative of Social Marketing at USF. The majority of participants were Mexican and spoke both English and Spanish. Results of these interviews and focus groups included finding a general lack of knowledge of the risk for and etiology of NTDs. Using recommendations from the individuals who participated in the interviews and focus groups, a photo novella was constructed. The photo novella and low-literacy level brochure were specifically designed for the Mexican migrant workers.



## PRESENTATIONS

Members of the FFAC actively participated in many conferences and meetings throughout the state and on the national level. Topics of discussion at these meetings included survey results and information about folic acid usage and NTD prevention. The following is a list of presentations that were made during the years 1999-2002:

- Promoting Folic Acid to Prevent Birth Defects—poster presentation at NBDPN meeting
- Using PRAMS Data to Guide the Development of a Folic Acid Prevention and Intervention Initiative in Florida —platform presentation at National PRAMS meeting
- Provider Knowledge and Clinical Practice Related to Birth Defects/Genetic Disorders—platform presentation at Society for Pediatric Research annual meeting
- Provider Knowledge and Clinical Practice in the Use of Folic Acid to Prevent Neural Tube Defects—poster presentation at American College of Preventive Medicine
- Development of Hispanic Media Materials—platform presentation at MAFO National Farmworkers Meeting in Miami
- Folic Acid Update: Innovations in Perinatal Research and Programs – Are We Doing Enough to Prevent Neural Tube Defects? — Poster presentation at annual APHA meeting
- Presentation of Survey Results at MOD Folic Acid Conference Calls
- Platform and tabletop presentation at Partners in Perinatal Health Sharing Solutions Conference
- Posters, brochures and videos at Tallahassee Women’s Show
- Poster presentation at NPDPN annual meeting
- Rhea Chiles, guest on statewide talk show called “Let’s Do Lunch”
- Radio interview with the MOD Associate Director of Program Services of the North Central and Northeast divisions of the Florida chapter
- Folic Acid presentation at Polk County Health Department
- CD-ROM of FFAC activities at National Council on Folic Acid annual meeting.

